The purpose of this scripted guide is to discuss potential outcomes of possible COVID-19 infection with at risk adults prior to a health crisis, including the elderly, those with chronic conditions (eg. heart/lung/renal disease, diabetes) or immunocompromised patients (eg. cancer, HIV/AIDS, transplant recipients). The intention is to open up dialogue and to introduce possible limitations to critical care interventions - eg. they may not be a candidate for ventilation, or for transfer to hospital. It is not intended to be a conversation to convince patients/clients to change their MOST status. This guide is to learn more about patients.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONVERSATION FLOW</th>
<th>GUIDED SCRIPT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Set up the conversation</strong></td>
<td>&quot;I'd like to talk with you about COVID-19 and what may be ahead for you and your care. I would also like to hear from you about what is important to you so that we can make sure we provide you with the care you want if you get sick with COVID-19 - <strong>is this okay?</strong>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduce purpose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prepare of future decisions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ask permission</td>
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</table>

Transition conversation to Step 2. Utilize paraphrasing and demonstrate empathy to let them know they've been heard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. <strong>Assess COVID-19 understanding and preferences</strong></th>
<th>&quot;What is your <strong>understanding</strong> about COVID-19 and how it is affecting at risk people?&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What is your understanding about COVID-19 and how it is affecting at risk people?</td>
<td>&quot;How much <strong>information</strong> would you like from me about COVID-19 and what is likely to be ahead if you get sick with it?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How are you coping during this time of uncertainty?</td>
<td>&quot;How are you coping during this time of uncertainty?&quot;</td>
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</table>

Transition conversation to Step 3. Utilize paraphrasing and demonstrate empathy to let them know they've been heard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. <strong>Share prognosis</strong></th>
<th>&quot;I want to share with you our current <strong>understanding</strong> of COVID-19 and how it affects people at risk, specifically those like you with (specific health condition(s), eg. heart/lung/renal disease, cancer, diabetes, etc.).&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Share prognosis</td>
<td>&quot;COVID-19 is a virus that spreads through contact with liquid droplets when someone coughs or sneezes, often entering through our eyes, nose or throat if you are in close contact. We know that it is particularly serious for vulnerable people, especially for those who have other health problems. It can also cause other very severe problems.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Caution: purpose is not to provide patient education</td>
<td>&quot;It can be difficult to predict what will happen if you get sick with COVID-19. I <strong>hope</strong> it would not be severe and that you will continue to live well at (current place of residence: home, assisted living, long term care, etc.).&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Frame as a &quot;wish...worry&quot; &quot;hope ... wonder&quot; statement</td>
<td>&quot;But I'm <strong>worried</strong> that as an adult with other health problems, you could get sick quickly and that you are at risk of dying. I think it is important for us to prepare for that possibility.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transition conversation to Step 4 by allowing for silence. Consider exploring emotion. Refer to SIC Clinicians Reference Guide for more scripted language on common difficult responses (Eg. tears, anger, denial). March 26, 2020
CONVERSATION FLOW | GUIDED SCRIPT
---|---
4. Explore key topics | "What is most important to you right now? What means the most to you, and gives your life meaning?"
| | "What are your biggest fears and worries about the future and your health?"
| | "What gives you strength as you think about the future?"
| | "How much does your family/people that matter to you know about your priorities and wishes?"
| | "Is there anything else that we need to know about you so that we can give you the best care possible?"

Transition conversation to Step 5. Utilize paraphrasing and demonstrate empathy to let them know they’ve been heard.

5. Reassurance | "We want you to know that our priority is to ensure that you are cared for and comfortable if you become sicker. Regardless of the medical treatments that you get or do not get, your health care team will always provide treatments to help make you feel better. So it is important to let us know if you get a new cough, fever, shortness of breath or other signs that your health is changing. We will continue to support you as best we can to get the right help for you."

Transition conversation to Step 6. Utilize paraphrasing and demonstrate empathy to let them know they’ve been heard.

6. Close the conversation | "I've heard you say that _________ is really important to you. Keeping that in mind, and what we know about COVID-19 and your current health, I recommend* that we...."

Focus: Wellbeing | “Talk again in a few days, to reassess where you are at.”

Focus: Illness | "Talk with your primary care providers."
| | "Make plans for care at home."

Focus: Support System | “Talk to your family/those that matter to you/including your Substitute Decision Makers.”

Focus: Help | “Get you more information about risks and benefits regarding specific critical care treatments (e.g. restarting your heart or using a breathing machine).”

"How does this seem to you?"
| | "I know this is a scary time for all of us. We will do everything we can to help you through this."

7. Document your conversation on the ACP Record and fax if non-acute setting. Communicate with primary care providers. Store in Greensleeve if paper charts are used in your setting.

8. Communicate with key clinicians.
Serious Illness Care Program

The Serious Illness Care Program is a well-established method of how to engage in meaningful discussions with patients and families. In regular circumstances, clinicians are encouraged to attend a 3-hour training session, & read through the 20 pg companion guide. In the current climate, we recognize this isn’t possible for most clinicians.

If you need to start using this guide right now – please read this page.

Principles

- You will not harm your patient by talking about their illness and the importance of planning
- Anxiety is normal for both patients and clinicians during these discussions. It is important to acknowledge and validate the emotion(s) in order to move forward
- Patients want and need the truth about prognosis to make informed decisions
- The purpose of this conversation is not to establish a new MOST status, if the discussion naturally flows in this direction, explore this in your recommendations.

The order of the questions and the language is chosen very specifically. Patients are very accepting if you explain that you will be reading off the page and following the guided script: “I may refer to a Conversation Guide, just to make sure that I don’t miss anything important.”

Practices

✓ Give a direct, honest prognosis about the risk of COVID-19 for your patient’s condition to the best of your knowledge, within your own scope of practice
✓ Allow silence as time permits
✓ Acknowledge and explore emotion as it occurs. Do not just talk about facts and procedures
✓ Make a recommendation. In these distressing times, patients & families need to hear your professional opinion.
✓ Listen more than you talk.
✓ Avoid premature reassurance, instead align with the patients in hoping things may improve
✓ Focus on patient-centred goals and priorities not medical procedures
✓ Do not offer a menu of interventions, especially those that are not clinically beneficial
✓ Use the wish, worry, wonder framework...
  o I wish allows for aligning with the patient’s hopes.
  o I worry allows for being truthful while sensitive.
  o I wonder is a subtle way to make a recommendation.

Resources

- Healthcare Provider Serious Illness Resources
- Clinician Reference Guide: Strategies for Common Scenarios
- Public Advance Care Planning Resources

Advance Care Planning